

Claim Amendments

This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

I Claim:

1. (Currently Amended) A restraining gasket for use in a stuffing box assembly when connecting a male pipe portion to a female pipe portion that is tightenably connected to a gland, said restraining gasket comprising:

- a) a ~~compressible~~ deformable body having a spigot-facing surface, a radially outward surface, a gland-facing surface, and a gutter positioned at or radially inward of the radially outward surface
- b) a locking member, said member having a tooth portion and an embedded body portion, wherein at least a portion of the tooth portion is positioned to engage the male pipe portion.

2. (Original) A restraining gasket as in Claim 1, wherein the gutter is positioned between the leading portion of the gasket and a radially outermost area of the locking member.

3. (Original) A restraining gasket as in Claim 1, wherein the gutter forms a portion of the exterior contour of the radially outer surface.

4. (Original) A restraining gasket as in Claim 3, wherein the radially outer surface includes a compression seat surface and a distortion control surface, said distortion control surface leading into the gutter and disposed at an angle of between 5 and 20 degrees with reference to a central axis of the gasket.

5. (Original) A restraining gasket as in Claim 1, wherein the gutter is a void below the radially outer surface.

6. (Original) A restraining gasket as in Claim 1, further comprising a plurality of density regions, wherein said regions are adapted to influence the movement of said locking members.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of assembling a restrained mechanical joint, comprising the steps of:

- a) urging a portion of a gasket into a sealing relationship between a bell and a spigot, and
- b) subsequent to step (a), compressing-deforming the gasket by tightening a gland to the bell to at least partially collapse a gutter in the gasket;
- c) subsequent to beginning step (b), rotating a locking segment into resistive contact between the bell and the spigot.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of assembly as in Claim 7, wherein the gutter is a void below ~~the~~a radially outer surface of the gasket.

9. (Original) A method of assembly as in Claim 7, wherein the gutter is an annular depression in ~~the~~ a radially outer surface of the gasket.

10. (Currently Amended) A restraining gasket for use in a stuffing box assembly, adapted to change its center of pressure as it deforms in response to tightening of a gland to a bell~~compression~~.

11. (Original) The gasket of Claim 10, wherein the change in center of pressure is influenced by a collapsible void or gutter.

12. (Original) A gasket as in Claim 10, comprising a locking segment ~~being~~ having at least one tooth disposed radially inwardly.

13. (Currently Amended) A gasket as in Claim 12, wherein said locking segment comprises a plurality of teeth disposed radially inwardly and an area between at least two of said ~~tooth~~ teeth is devoid of gasket material.